

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 2-15, 17-32, and 34-44 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that claims 2-15, 17-32, and 34-44 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner rejected claims 1, 16, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,795,394 to Swinkels et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,636,205 to Suzuki et al.¹

By this Amendment, Applicants rewrite claims 2, 4, 7, 9, and 14 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim 1; rewrite claims 17, 19, 22, 24, and 31 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim 16; and rewrite claims 34, 36, 39, 41, and 43 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim 33. Applicants also cancel claims 1, 16, and 33 without any prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter thereof. Claims 2-15, 17-32, and 34-44 are currently pending.

Applicants thank the Examiner for pointing out allowable subject matter in claims 2-15, 17-32, and 34-44. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 16, and 33 under § 103. However, to expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicants have rewritten claims 2-15, 17-32, and 34-44 in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner, and canceled claims 1, 16, and 33. The Section 103 rejection of claims 1, 16, and 33 is therefore moot.

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

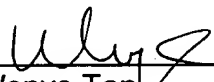
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to claims 2-15, 17-32, and 34-44 and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 24, 2006

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